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DECEMBER
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A MARVEL MONTHLY 45p

MARVEL SUPER-HEROES



THE
RED
GUARDIAN



ANNUALS 1981

This year we are making a special purchase of nine Annuals for all loyal Marvelites.

For the first time ever: STARBURST Annual, an all new overview of film and TV fantasy with lots of colour pics from the Starburst Editorial crew.

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Last, but not least. The annual which is published before the magazine of the same name, WORMZ GUMMIDGE, includes an interview with star Jon Pertwee.

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MARVEL SUPERHEROES

Editor: Bernie Jaye, Art Assistants: Floron Florenzo; Neil Diamond.

CAPTAIN BRITAIN

IN SUPPORT OF DARWIN P.4
Within the bowels of an alternative London, U.K.'s premier Superhero searches for the origin of the junkheap monster, but, instead, discovers more about his own origin!

THE AVENGERS

THE YESTERDAY QUEST P.9
Bizarre facts — and figures — emerge from Pietro and Wanda's past!

THE RED GUARDIAN P.26
A new Superhero stands between the lovesick Hawkeye and his Natasha — while Hercules gets entwined with a mythical monster!

'INSIDE COMICS'

Marvel's Golden Age re-visited! P.45



After defeating the 'Junkheap that walked like a Man' the good Captain trailed the disintegrating monster back to the apparent source of his power — could that be the peculiar liquid that was dripping from a storm sewer outlet?



IN SUPPORT OF DARWIN!







WHATEVER THE BEAMS ARE THAT
ISSUE FROM THE INTRUDERS'
UMBRELLAS...

THEY PASS UNHARMED
THROUGH CAPTAIN
BATTAL'S ADVANCING
FORCE FIELD PRO-
DUCING UNPREDICTABLE
RESULTS!

FAREWELL
ENEMIES OF
PROGRESS!

WHAT'S
HAPPENING? REALITY
IS TEARING!

UNTIL THEY FIND THEM-
SELVES IN AN IMPOSSIBLE
PLACE!

WHERE ARE WE?
NOW

TRICKERY
KNOWS

THE PROCESS IS SIMILAR TO
HIS OWN POWER!

THOSE
'WEAPONS HAVE
SPRUNG US INTO ANOTHER
DIMENSION.

THEN
FLU FOR ONCE! TAKE
US BACK!

WILL
TRY, BUT MUST FIND
OUR BEARINGS
FIRST.

WITH THE SKILL
OF TEN CEN-
TURIES' PRAC-
TICE, THE ELF
ADDUCES THEIR
POSITION AND
SOON...

THANK
GOD FOR THAT!

MUST DISARM
THIS LOT BEFORE
WE'RE BACK.

HOLD IT - YOUR
JOB ISN'T FIN-
ISHED YET!

THEY'RE
BACK!

MOST
IRREGULAR!

FIRST WE'LL GET
RID OF THESE - I DON'T
THINK WE'RE IN FOR
A SHOWER DOWN
HERE.

I WISH THERE WAS
MORE ROOM TO
MANOEUVRE!

HE HAS BATTLED ALMOST WITHOUT FAUSE
SINCE ARRIVING AT WHAT HE THOUGHT
WAS HIS HOME...

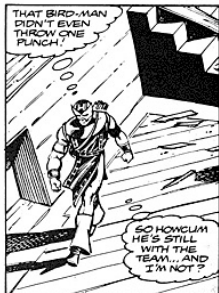
THE CRAZY GANG, THE POLICE,
THE OUTCASTS, THE JUNK
MONSTER... NONE HAVE MADE
HIM FEEL WELCOME...



THE AVENGERS

MARK GRUENWALD & STEVEN GRANT / DAVID MICHELINIE / JOHN BYRNE / DAN GREEN / COSANZA / ROGER STERN / JIM SHOOTER
PLOT / WRITER / PENCILS / INKS / LETTERS / EDITOR / EDITOR-IN-CHIEF









AND WE MIGHT AS WELL RELAX, TOO. I HAVE TO GO REPAIR MY ARMOUR--

--BUT THERE'S NOTHING ON THE AGENDA FOR THE REST OF US UNTIL MR. STARK DROPS BY TO--



--CHECK ON THE NEW SECURITY SYSTEM, ANY COMPLAINTS, JARVIS?

NONE FROM ME, SIR, THOUGH YOU MIGHT ASK THE OTHERS.



"I THINK I'LL DO JUST THAT," ANSWERS THE YOUNG MILLIONAIRE INVENTOR, TURNING TO WALK A FAMILIAR HALLWAY TO THE MANSION'S SPACIOUS KITCHEN...

THANK YOU, JOCASTA. I LIKE IT BETTER THAN MY OLD COSTUME, TOO. IT WAS DESIGNED BY--



WHOOOPS! SORRY, MS. MARVEL. I WAS JUST REACHING FOR THE--

THAT'S OKAY, TONY. YOU CAN BUMP ME ANY TIME.



HMM. IF YOU LIKE MY BUMPS, MS. M., YOU SHOULD TRY MY DIPS.

DO YOU DANCE?

NO, BUT I DON'T SEE WHY THAT SHOULD STOP US...



SMALL TALK... A PASTIME SO INHERENTLY HUMAN, AND FOR THE GLITTERING CYBORG NAMED JOCASTA--

--QUITE FRUSTRATING AS WELL.



FOR SHE FEELS A LONGING, A DESIRE TO JOIN IN THE CASUAL BANTER, AND YET...

...EVEN THOUGH HER MIND HAS BEEN IMPRINTED WITH THE PERSONALITY PATTERNS OF THE OUTGOING JANET PYM, SHE FEELS CONSTRAINED, UNABLE TO OPEN UP TO INTERACT.



AND SO IT IS WITH SMALL SCOWL AND LITTLE WONDER--

-- THAT SHE SEEKS OUT THE ONE ENTITY WHO MIGHT, IF NOT UNDERSTAND, AT LEAST ACCEPT.



VISION?

AM I DISTURBING YOU? NOT REALLY, JOCASTA. COME IN.



I JUST THOUGHT YOU MIGHT WANT TO, WELL, TALK.

I'M AFRAID I'VE LITTLE TO TALK ABOUT. I'VE YET TO RECEIVE WORD FROM WANDA AND PIETRO, SO I MUST ASSUME THEIR JOURNEY GOES WELL.

EVEN THOUGH I CAN'T ELUDE A REGULAR FEELING OF DISQUIET, ONE THAT I DON'T FULLY UNDERSTAND.



BUT THAT'S EASY TO UNDERSTAND, VISION. YOU'RE JUST WORRIED ABOUT YOUR WIFE.

WORRIED? DOUBTFUL... AFTER ALL--



-- HOW CAN A MACHINE WORRY?

A... MACHINE?



THE COMMENT CUTS DEEPLY IF UNINTENTIONALLY, A SITUATION MADE IRONICAL BY THE STATEMENT'S COUNTERPOINT IN FACT.

FOR AS THE VISION RETURNS HIS GAZE TO THE WINDOW, THE SHADOWS OF HIS EYES GROW EVEN DARKER, AS IF TO MATCH THE GLOOM OF THE THICKENING DUSK OUTSIDE...



... A GLOOM MIRRORED,
SEVERAL DAYS LATER,
BY THE GUNMETAL SKIES
OF EAST TRANSIA --



-- AND BY A LATE WINTER STORM, BOTH UNEX-
PECTED AND, AS SOME OF THE SUPERSTITIOUS
VILLAGERS WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY AVOID, NOT
WHOLLY NATURAL ...



COME, MR. MAXIMOFF,
WE HAVE ARRIVED AT
THE INN. LET ME HELP
YOU.

THANK YOU, MY
SON. THE WARMTH
WILL FEEL GOOD
TO AN OLD MAN'S
BONES.

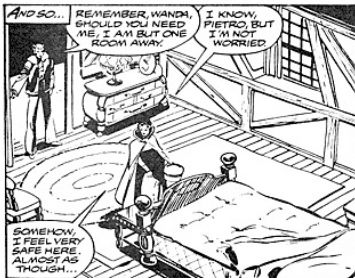


INSIDE...

AH, OUR ILLUSTRIOUS
GUESTS HAVE ARRIVED!
WUNDERBAR!

YOU
RECOGNIZE
US?

YA, OF COURSE!
THE NAMES OF WANDA
AND PIETRO FRANK--
THE SCARLET WITCH
AND QUICKSILVER-- ARE
KNOWN TO ALL OF TRANSIA.
YOU SHALL HAVE THE BEST
ROOMS IN MEIN HOUSE!



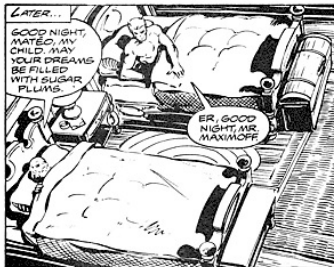
AND SO... REMEMBER, WANDA,
SHOULD YOU NEED
ME, I AM BUT ONE
ROOM AWAY.

I KNOW,
PIETRO, BUT
I'M NOT
WORRIED

SOMEHOW,
I FEEL VERY
SAFE HERE--
ALMOST AS
THOUGH...



... I'VE
COME
HOME!



"...AND I RECALL STORIES TOLD 'ROUND A CAMPFIRE, STORIES OF THE GREAT WAR THAT WANDA LATER CAME TO BELIEVE HAD HAPPENED TO HER.



"IT NEVER SEEMED IMPORTANT TO HURT HER WITH CONTRADICTION.

"THOUGH THERE IS PAIN APLENTY IN MY FINAL MEMORY, THAT OF FLEEING FROM THE FLAMING CAMP AS MY FATHER WAS BEATEN BY ATTACKING VILLAGERS-- JUST AS MAXIMOFF DESCRIBED!



"IF THE OLD MAN WASN'T THERE, HOW COULD HE HAVE KNOWN?



"AND WHY DOES WANDA INSIST THAT OUR BIRTHPLACE WAS ON THAT MOUNTAIN, IN THE SEQUESTERED CITADEL CALLED...
WUNDAGORE?

"SHE TELLS WITH GREAT SINCERITY OF HOW BOB AND MADELINE FRANK CAME TO THAT LEGENDARY COMPLEX TO HAVE THEIR CHILDREN--



"-- OF HOW HEALTHY AND VERY SPECIAL TWINS WERE BIRTHED--



"-- AND HOW THE MOTHER DIED TRAGICALLY OF COMPLICATIONS SOON AFTER.



"WE'VE BOTH HEARD SO MANY TIMES THAT THE SKY OVER THE MOUNTAIN WAS FILLED WITH LIGHTS THE NIGHT WE WERE BORN...

"... WHILE TWICE WHEN WANDA'S POWERS EBBED, THEY SEEMED TO BE RESTORED BY RETURNING TO THIS LAND. SO EACH TALE APPEARS TO HAVE A BASIS IN FACT.



"BUT HOW CAN THEY BOTH BE TRUE? HOW?"

NO ANSWER ARISES. NONE WAS REALLY EXPECTED, AND SO THE SILVER-MAINED MUTANT CAN MERELY RETURN, FROWNING, TO HIS BED--



--PRETENDING HALF-HEARTEDLY THAT SLEEP WILL SOON COME.

WHILE IN A CHAMBER NEARBY, THE SCARLET WITCH BREATHES SHALLOWLY IN HER WILL-INDUCED SLUMBER...



...A RESPIRE THAT IS SOON TO BE SHARPLY, AND EERILY--



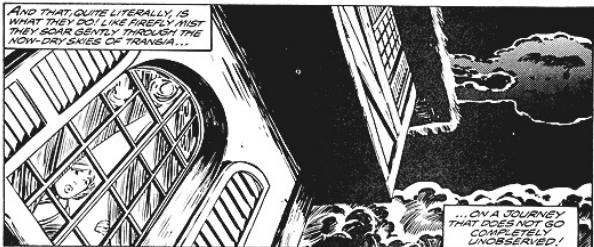
--INTERRUPTED!



AWAKEN, MILADY! KNOW THEE THAT I AM MOORED, A FELLOW TRAVELLER IN THIS LAND, AND THOU WHO ART DEEMED THE SCARLET WITCH MUST NOW TRAVEL WITH ME--

--IF THOU DOST HOPE TO UNRAVEL THE TWISTED SKEINS OF TRUTH!

WH-WHAT?



MILES PASS AS SECONDS
BENEATH THE SCINTILLATING
CARRIER SPHERES--



--MILES THAT AT LAST LEAD
TO THE SNOW-SCATTERED,
WINDSWEEP FACE OF--

--WUNDAGORE
MOUNTAIN!
BUT WHY
HERE?



THERE ARE REASONS,
MILADY, AND
TAKE CARE,
FOR I SENSE
THAT THERE
MAY ALSO
BE GREAT--



--DANGER!

SOME SORT OF
STASIS CANNON! IT
MUST BE ONE OF THE
HIGH EVOLUTIONARY'S
GUARDIAN DEVICES!

BEWARE, MILADY!
THE DRAGON DOTH
SEEM READY TO
STRIZEEK!



LOOKS LIKE
MODRED IS ON
THE UP-AND-UP! THAT
RAY BLAST WAS
MEANT FOR ME!

MAGICIAN!
ARE YOU--?



I AM
UNHARMED,
MILADY. THY
MUTANT HEX
DID WHAT
MINE OWN
SORCERY
COULD NOT!

BUT NOW WE MUST
HASTEN! FOR OUR
GOAL RESTS MERE
PACES BEYOND
THIS RIPE.

BEHOLD!
THE ONCE-GREAT
MAJESTY OF
WUNDAGORE!

IT LIES CRADLED IN THE
CANYON OF THE HOLLOWED-
OUT MOUNTAIN, STILL
CLEANING AFTER 50
MANY DESERTED YEARS,
A WRECKED RUIN WHOSE
PRESENCE SEEMS AS SAD
AS IT IS SILENT...

...AS IT IS
AWESOME!

THE TWO WAYFARERS
STAND STARING FOR A
MOMENT, UNSPEAKING, AND
THEN BEGIN TO PICK THEIR WAY
CAREFULLY TOWARDS THE
CRUMBLING SPRES... EVENTUALLY
ROUNDING A FINAL CORNER TO
DISCOVER--



AYE, WANDA FRANK, WHILE YON
THAT I DO, THE
TOME BELONGS
TO HIM WHO
I SERVE.

LADY... I AM
AFRAID THAT--



THE CRACKLE OF MAGICAL ENERGY
ECHOES AMONGST THE BOULDERS,
FADING... LEAVING ONLY THE WHISPER
OF MOUNTAIN WIND --



--AND A LOW RUMBLE
OF LAUGHTER THAT
COMES FROM FAR,
FAR AWAY...

MORNING.

I HOPE YOU
AND ANA PLAN
TO HAVE
BREAKFAST,
MY SON. IT'S A
MOST IMPOR-
TANT MEAL,
YOU KNOW.

WANDA?

TEP
TEP

PERHAPS
SOME
PORRIDGE
WITH DOLLOPS
OF HONEY...?

WE'VE MUCH
TO DO TODAY,
AND--

--WHAT?
SHE'S
GONE!



A-ALL RIGHT,
MATEO, YOU
DON'T HAVE
TO HAVE
PORRIDGE!

SCONES
ARE NICE,
TOO!



MY SISTER!
HAVE YOU
SEEN HER?

W-WHY, NO,
HERR FRANK!
NO ONE HAS
GONE IN OR
OUT ALL
MORNING!



BLAST! TAKE CARE
OF MR. MAXIMOFF,
WILL YOU? HE'S A
LITTLE MAD, BUT
HARMLESS.

WELL, UH,
I--I
SUPPOSE
I COULD...

BUT,
MATEO--



--I DON'T WANT
TO BE LEFT
ALONE...

... AGAIN.



LIKE THE SLIPPERY-SLICK METAL FROM WHICH HE TAKES HIS NAME, QUICKSILVER SPEEDS THROUGH THE PATHWAYS AND FIELDS OF THE TINY VILLAGE--

--SEARCHING EVERY NOOK, CRANNY AND COW PASTURE IN PRECISELY THE TIME IT TAKES TO TELL ABOUT IT!

THOUGH THE RESULTS OF THAT SPECTACULAR SEARCH ARE FAR FROM SATISFYING.

NOTHING!
NOT A HINT,
A CLUE!

I SHOULD
NEVER HAVE
LEFT WANDA
ALONE!

I COME THOUSANDS
OF MILES TO FIND
THE TRUTH OF
MY FAMILY--

--AND I
ONLY
SUCCEED
IN LOSING
MY SISTER!

PARDON, HERR
QUICKSILVER,
BUT MEIN PAPA
SAYS THAT YOU
ARE LOOKING
FOR FRAULEIN
FRANK.

I THINK I
KNOW
WHERE SHE
WENT.

EH? WHAT ARE
YOU SAYING,
GIRL?

I SAW A LIGHT
FROM MEIN WINDOW
LAST NIGHT. I THINK
YOUR SISTER FLEW OFF
TO DER MOUNTAIN.
IS SHE A FAERIE?

"THEY SAY THERE WERE LIGHTS ON
THE MOUNTAIN THE NIGHT WE WERE
BORN..."

GOOD
GOD!

THANK YOU, CHILD! YOUR HELP HAS BEEN INVALUABLE!



I ONLY PRAY THAT IT'S NOT COME TOO LATE!



DESPERATION RESTORES THE SILVER MUTANT'S STAMINA, BLINDING HIS MIND TO WEARINESS--



--JUST AS IT BLINDS HIS EYES TO THE HEAVILY-CLOAKED FIGURE THAT WATCHES HIS PROGRESS UP WINDAGORE MOUNTAIN.

FOR PIETRO FRANK SENSES THAT HIS SISTER IS IN DANGER--



--HE HAS A GOOD IDEA OF WHERE SHE MAY BE--



--AND WITH A DETERMINATION INCONCEIVABLE TO MERE HUMANS--



--HE KNOWS THAT NOTHING BUT NOTHING WILL KEEP HIM FROM HER!

UNFORTUNATELY
HE'S WRONG!

BOMP!

!UNG!

AND BECAUSE
OF THAT ILL-TIMED
ERROR--

CHUD

SPAK

--THE ONLY
THING
PIETRO FRANK--

--KNOWS NOW--

--IS--

--DARKNESS!

**RESTORATION: CONSCIOUSNESS
RETURNING IN SLIVERS AND SHADOWS...**

UMHHNN. WHAT...
WHAT HAPPENED?
MY HEAD--!

PLEASE.
BE CALM.
YOU ARE SAFE,
FOR THE
PRESENT.



NEXT ISSUE: NIGHTS OF WUNDAGORE!

THE AVENGERS

THE RED GUARDIAN!

THE IMPOSSIBLE HAS OCCURRED!
FOR THE 48 HOURS THAT HAVE
ELAPSED SINCE THE DEFEAT OF
DIABLO, PEACE AND QUIET
HAVE REIGNED SUPREME AT
AVENGERS MANSION! THEN JUST
AS CAP AND HAWKEYE RETURN
FROM A NOCTURNAL
EXCURSION--

HEADS UP,
MY FELLOW
AVENGERS!

STAN LEE
ELATEDLY EDITS AND EXTOLLS A
ROY THOMAS-JOHN BUSCEMA
POWERHOUSE PIECE OF RESISTANCE!

INKED BY GEORGE BELL
LETTERED BY JERRY MANN

(AND, IF YOU CAN THINK OF A
BETTER PLACE ON THIS PAGE
TO PRINT OUR CAVORTIN'
CREDITS, CONSIDER
YOURSELF NO-PRIZED!)

WHAT IN--?
THAT COMET-FAST
CREEP GRABBED THE
BOW RIGHT OUTTA
MY HANDS! E'L--

I SHALL HANG
UP THESE HEAVY
WEAPONS FOR
YOU, IF YOU
DON'T MIND!

HOLD IT, HAWKEYE!
DON'T YOU SEE WHAT'S
HAPPENED?

QUICKSILVER
HAS LEARNED
HOW TO FLY!!

AND, AS THE SHIELD AND BOW ARE SWIFTLY PUT AWAY...

HOW DID YOU
GAIN THIS
NEW POWER,
MY BROTHER?

ALLOW ME TO
EXPLAIN, WANDA!

BUT FIRST, I MUST
WREST THE ATTENTION
OF HERCULES FROM
HIS PRECIOUS ILIAD!

BN! I LIKE
THIS NOT,
FLEET ONE--!

UH OH! PIETRO'S
PLAYING WITH FIRE!



AN OLYMPIAN GOD
ISN'T GOING TO CARE MUCH
FOR BEING OUTED BY
A MERE MORTAL!

REIN UP
SON! THIS IS
CAPTAIN
AMERICA
TALKING!

I'D BETTER SEE IF I CAN
QUENCH PIETRO'S EXUBER-
ANCE--BEFORE HERCULES
BEATS ME TO IT!

AS ALWAYS, I SHALL
HONOUR YOUR WISHES,
STEVE ROGERS--

--AFTER I
DEMONSTRATE
HOW EASILY I
CAN NOW
BLUDGE YOU!

MISSED!!

NOT ONLY
CAN HE FLY--
HE'S ALSO FASTER
THAN HE USED
TO BE!

BUT, I'LL BE READY
FOR HIM ON THE NEXT
PASS--AND IT'LL BE
A DIFFERENT STORY!

Swoosh!!

HOWEVER, THERE IS DESTINED TO BE NO SECOND PASS, FOR ...

I FEAR I MUST
APOLOGIZE,
AVENGERS!

IN MY ELATION, I FORGOT THAT
OTHERS MIGHT BEING
BUFFETED ABOUT!

YEAH? CURE AND
LET ME REMIND
YOU, WHITEY!

SIMMER DOWN,
PARTNER! YOU'VE
BEEN KNOWN TO
ACT A BIT JUVENILE
YOURSELF!

JUVENILE?
YES--I
SUPPOSE
I WAS!

YET, IF YOU HAD BEEN ~~I~~ A FEW
MINUTES AGO, TESTING YOUR
VELOCITY AGAINST THAT OF A
HURTLING BULLET--!

Y'KNOW, TWINKLE-
TOES--I LIKED YOU
BETTER WHEN YOU
WERE THE SILENT
SAM TYPE!

SUDDENLY, I
FOUND THAT--
BY VIBRATING
MY LEGS AT
TOP SPEED--
I COULD FLY
FOR SHORT
DISTANCES!

I SUPPOSE
I AM SOMEWHAT
EXCITED? STILL,
YOU MUST
UNDERSTAND!

DON'T MIND MY BOW-SLINGING **BUDDY**, PIETRO! HE'S NOT NEARLY AS CANTANKEROUS AS HE **SOUNDS!**

NOW, EVERYBODY ASSEMBLE IN THE **MEETING ROOM!** HAWKEYE AND I HAVE SOMETHING TO...

YOU PRESUME TOO FAR, CAPTAIN AMERICA!



HUH?

WHAT'S EATING YOU, HERCULES?

SEEK NOT TO PERPLEX ME WITH THINE OVERBLOWN VERNACULAR!

I WOULD KNOW WHY I--THE **SON OF ZEUS**--SHOULD CRINGE AT THE WORDS OF SUCH AS **THEE!**

I'VE BEEN HALF EXPECTING THIS!

HERCULES IS FAR TOO PROUD TO TAKE ORDERS FROM ANY MORTAL--LET ALONE ONE WITH NO **SUPER-POWER!**

AS A MATTER OF FACT, I WASN'T EVEN TALKING TO YOU, MISTER, SINCE YOU'RE NOT TRULY AN **AVENGER!**

BUT, AS LONG AS YOU **ASKED--**

HAVE AT THEE, STAR-CLAD SWAIN!

WHEN NEXT THOU DOST AWAKEN, THOU SHALT HAVE LEARNED A LESSON MOST MEMORABLE!

AND I THOUGHT I WAS NOT-HEADED! THAT BEWHISKERED WONDER DOESN'T RESPECT ANYBODY--UNTIL HE'S HAD A GO AT HIM!

WHAT CHANCE DOES CAP HAVE AGAINST A **GOD?**

I'LL GRAB MY **BOW**, AND STAND BY TO GIVE HIM A **HAND!**



YET, WITHIN A MATTER OF ACTION-STUPID MOMENTS, CAPTAIN AMERICA PROVES THAT HE **NEEDS** NO HELP...

SORRY, HERK--BUT YOU TELEGRAPHED THAT LUNGE A MILE!

LET'S **SEE** NOW--I SEEM TO RECALL THAT YOU WERE GONNA **TEACH** ME SOMETHING...

AND, BY ZEUS, I **SHALL--** THOU WILT BUT **STAND** AND **FIGHT!**

CAN SUCH AGILITY BE **POSSIBLE?**

HE'S **RIGHT!** MY ONE HOPE IS TO KEEP **DODGING!** WHEN THAT FAILS--I'VE **HAD IT!**



THE NEXT INSTANT, WITH NO PRIOR WARNING...



OF ALL THE CRUMMY TIMES FOR THIS PLACE TO BECOME THE CROSSROADS OF THE NATION!



AND, WHEN JAN AND HANK COME FROM THE LAB SECTION...



BUT, WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? AFTER ALL THIS TIME OF LIVING ON A PALTRY \$25,000 A YEAR--I'M RICH--RICH!!



HANK, YOU BIG WONDERFUL MAN--MOUNTAIN! DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS MEANS?



THEN, ABRUPTLY, THE MOOD IS CHANGED, AS...



FOR AN ANSWER TO WANDA'S QUERY, LET US
OBSERVE HAWKEYE SHORTLY THEREAFTER,
ON THE LOWER EAST SIDE...



MOMENTS LATER, THE DISGUISED ARCHER ENTERS A CHEAP
SLEAZY BAR--WHICH SEEMS TO TORTURE HIM WITH MEMORIES
OF HIS OWN DAYS OUTSIDE THE LAW...



FOR LONG, ANXIOUS MOMENTS, HAWKEYE
SCANS THE UNKNOWN CIRCLE OF
THE SALOON, LOOKING FOR A CERTAIN
FACE! THEN...



DON'T SWEAT IT!
YOU'LL BE TAKEN
CARE OF! NOW,
ABOUT THE BLACK
WIDOW--



IN FACT, I THINK I'LL JUST LEARN
YOU WHAT IT MEANS TO MESS
AROUND WITH BRUISER BATES--!



INSTANTLY, THE ENTIRE ROOM SEEMS TO COME ALIVE, AMIDST SHOUTS OF ANGRY DEFIANCE...

THAT MASKED DO-GOODER DON'T BELONG HERE!

LET'S SEND 'IM BACK WHERE HE CAME FROM!

I'LL TAKE 'IM FROM BEHIND!

GET 'IM! HE AINT NO GREAT SHAKES WITHOUT HIS FANCY ARROWS!

SO, THEY THINK I'M NO MATCH FOR 'EM WITHOUT MY BOW, HUH? WELL, THAT'S ONE LITTLE MYTH OL' HAWKEYE WILL JUST HAVE TO PUNCTURE!

AND, PUNCTURE IT HE DOES--AS ANYONE CASUALLY PASSING BY THE FRONT WINDOW COULD HARDLY AVOID NOTICING...

NOR, FOR THAT MATTER, COULD ONE WHO WAS EVEN STROLLING PAST THE REAR WINDOW...

WHILE, INSIDE...

UNNNH! WHO'S THE BUM THAT SAID THAT CHARACTER COULDN'T FIGHT?

YOU KIDDIN'? HE WUZ THE FIRST ONE TO GET CLOBBERED!

I GOTTA MAKE SURE BUSBY-LIPS HERE DON'T TAKE OFF ON ME--BUT, NO REASON WHY I CAN'T TEACH THESE CLOWNS A LESSON!

YOU BETTER BELIEVE IT! I AINT SPENT HOURS TRAININ' WITH CAPTAIN AMERICA FOR NOTHIN'!

THIS ISN'T AS HARD AS I FIGGERED! NAVES I SHOULD WORK OUT WITHOUT MY BOW MORE OFTEN!

BUT, THE VERY NEXT INSTANT...

AN' MAYBE I SHOULDN'T! I DIDN'T SEE THAT BIG BOHUNK WITH A CHAIR!

THAT OUGHTTA FINISH 'IM!

SWAK!

THUS, SCANT MOMENTS LATER, AS THE UNDERWORLD CHARACTERS RUSH TO THAT VERY SAME WINDOW...

YIPES! LOOK OUT--HE'S STILL ALIVE AN' KICKIN'!

SWISSH!

UGGNNNN!! YOU'RE TELLIN' ME?!

AND, AS A FINAL TRIO OF DESPERATE CUTTHROATS TRIES AN EN MASSE CHARGE...

THWA-K-OOWHIZZ!

PERSONAL NOTE: WE WERE GONNA LET THIS FIGHT GO ON FOR ANOTHER COUPLE OF PAGES--TILL WE LEARNED THAT THEN WE'D HAVE TO BUY A BOW-HUNTER'S LICENSE!
--STINGY STAN.

HE SURE--KNOCKED THE BREATH OUTTA ME! JUST THE SAME--THEY BETTER NOT COUNT ME OUT TOO SOON!

'CAUSE THEY JUST BELTED ME INTO THE ALLEY--WHERE I LEFT MY BOW AND ARROW!

AND, OL' HAWKEYE AINT ONE TO LET AN OMEN LIKE THAT SLIP BY HIM!

THEN, LIKE ODYSSEUS AGAINST THE ARMY OF SINISTER SUITORS--LIKE ROBIN HOOD AGAINST THE HORDES OF A PLUNDERING PRINCE--THE ONE AND ONLY HAWKEYE MAKES HIS MOVE!

WHOOOSH!

THIS IS THE KINDA ACTION I WAS BORN FOR!

I MUSTA BEEN NUTTY TO THINK OF FIGHTIN' ANY OTHER WAY!

OKAY, BRUISER--NOW THAT WE GOT THE PLACE ALL TO OURSELVES...

YOU'LL GET YOUR BLOOD MONEY--BUT, YOU'RE GONNA SPILL ALL YOU KNOW ABOUT THE BLACK WIDOW, OR--

S-SURE, HAWKEYE! DON'T SLUG ME AGAIN! I DIDN'T MEAN NO HARM--!

BESIDES, ALL I KNOW IS ABOUT WHERE THE COMMIES ARE KEEPIN' HER--HONEST!!

SOON, A GRIM HAWKEYE ONCE MORE WALKS OUT INTO THE DARKENED CITY...

I'D TURN THAT CRUMB OVER TO THE F.B.I.-- BUT A BARGAIN'S A BARGAIN!

BESIDES, IT AINT ILLEGAL TO "OVERHEAR" INFO!

THE MAIN THING IS, NOW I KNOW WHERE NATASHA IS-- IF HE WASN'T LYIN'!

DINER

AN' IF HE WAS-- HE BETTER GO INTO HIDIN'!

WHAT'S WITH YOU, HERK? BURNIN' THE MIDNIGHT OIL?

I UNDERSTAND NOT THY PATTERNS OF SPEECH-- BUT, I CANNOT SLEEP! MY HEART DOTHS LONG FOR ADVENTURE!

YEAH? THEN I GOT SOME PLANS THAT MIGHT BE RIGHT UP YOUR ALLEY!

WHERE'EER THEY MAY LEAD, IMPETUOUS ONE-- HERCULES IS PREPARED TO FOLLOW!

THE PRINCE OF POWER WAS NOT MADE FOR IDLE LEISURE!

A FEW MINUTES LATER, WHEN THE AVENGING ARCHER HAS OUTLINED HIS PURPOSE...

... SO, ACCORDIN' TO THIS JOKER, NATASHA WAS BETRAYED BY A GUY INSIDE SWEDLO-- WHO THEN DEFECTED TO THE OTHER SIDE!

WE GOTTA GET TO HER, BEFORE--WHY'RE YOU LOOKIN' AT ME LIKE THAT, WHISKERST?

ME THINKS I HAVE EVER MISJUDGED THEE, MORTAL!

THINE OFTEN-BRASH WORDS DO BUT MASK A SOUL TORMENTED BY LOVE!

AND, ON THAT PERCEPTIVE NOTE, LET US SWITCH TO THE POWERFUL PAIR'S ASIAN DESTINATION, WHERE...

IT IS WITH PLEASURE, COMRADE GENERAL, THAT I WELCOME YOU TO MY NATION'S MOST SECRET BASE!

DO NOT SEEK TO STALL ME, COLONEL LING! YOU KNOW WHY I AM HERE!

AYE! YOU WISH TO SEE THE DREAD PSYCHOTRON-- OUR NEW INVENTION THAT WILL SOON BRING THE DECADENT DEMOCRACIES TO THEIR KNEES!

BUT FIRST, I WOULD HAVE YOU MEET THE ONE WHO ACTS AS SENTINEL FOR THAT MIGHTIEST OF WEAPONS...

I WOULD HAVE YOU MEET-- THE RED GUARDIAN!!

SUDDENLY, A JET-BLACK CURTAIN IS FLUNG BACK--TO REVEAL A MASSIVE, YET STRANGELY LITHE **FORM**...

BEHOLD, COMRADE--
THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC
PRESENTS ITS COUNTER-
PART TO THE ACCURSED
CAPTAIN AMERICA!

THOUGH BORN IN YOUR
COUNTRY, HE IS NOW OUR
FOREMOST DEFENDER
--THE INVINCIBLE
**RED
GUARDIAN!!**

WHAT
NONSENSE IS
THIS? I SEE BEFORE
ME A MAN IN A GAUDY
COSTUME--NOTHING
MORE!!



AM--YOU WOULD REQUIRE
A **DEMONSTRATION** OF
OUR HERO'S PROWESS?

IT SHALL BE **DONE!**
PROVE YOUR WORTH,
LOYAL ONE!

HE SHALL HAVE
HIS PROOF! I
VOW IT!

BAH! I HAVE HEARD
SUCH VOWS BEFORE--
IN POLAND, IN FINLAND
--EVEN IN DEVASTATED
HUNGARY!

IT WILL TAKE MORE
THAN A MERE OATH TO
IMPRESS **GENERAL
BRUSHNOV!**



THE NEXT SECOND...

WHAT DEVILRY
IS **THIS?**

FOOL--WHAT HAVE YOU
DONE? COMRADE
GENERAL IS FALLING!

IF HE IS HURT--IT
COULD MEAN WAR
BETWEEN OUR NATIONS!

I AM MERELY
DEMONSTRATING
MY **SKILL**--BY
HURLING MY MAGNET-
ICALLY-CONTROLLED
BELT EMBLEM!

BUT, DO NOT
FEAR! HE SHALL
NOT BE HARMED!



BY THE DRAGON-GODS OF MY
ANCESTORS! YOU CAUGHT HIM
IN **AIR**--WITH SPEED GREATER
THAN EVEN I DREAMED!

I HOPED YOU WOULD BE PLEASED,
COLONEL LING!

IF I AM TO ACCOMPLISH MY PURPOSE
--BY DESTROYING **CAPTAIN AMERICA**--
I MUST **SURPASS** HIM IN
EVERY WAY!

MY APOLOGIES FOR
SUCH A **GRAPHIC** DISPLAY,
COMRADE GENERAL!

YOUR APOLOGIES
ARE **NEEDLESS**--
IF INDEED YOUR
STRENGTH MATCHES
YOUR **SWIFTNES!**



THEN, WITHOUT WARNING, OTHER SINISTER FIGURES ENTER THE CHAMBER...



FORWARD, BROTHERS! IT IS OUR DUTY TO KILL THE COSTUMED ONE -- IF WE CAN!

AYE! IF WE CANNOT SURVIVE OUR MOST VIOLENT ATTACK, HE IS NOT WORTHY TO BE CALLED -- THE RED GUARDIAN!

ADVANCE! SHOW HIM NO QUARTER!

BUT, WITHIN SECONDS, IT BECOMES CLEAR THAT THEIR CRIMSON-CLAD PREY NEEDS NO QUARTER...

IS THIS THE BEST THAT CAN BE SENT AGAINST ME -- SIX BLUNDERING DOLTS?



IT IS NOT POSSIBLE!

HE SCATTERS US -- LIKE SHEEP! YUNNNH!

AND, HIS BEST BUCKLE -- FLIES THROUGH THE AIR AS IF BY MAGIC!



HALT! CEASE YOUR FIGHTING! I HAVE WITNESSED ENOUGH!

TRULY, THE RED GUARDIAN IS MORE THAN THE EQUAL OF THE ARROGANT CAPTAIN AMERICA!

I MUST SEE THE TWO OF THEM CLASH -- AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY!



WHAT? YOU WOULD BRING THAT STAR-STUPID DOG HERE -- IN THE VERY PLACE WHERE THE PSYCHOTRON IS HIDDEN?

QUIET, COLONEL! DO NOT FORGET THAT YOUR SUPERIORS HAVE ORDERED YOU TO OBEY ME -- IN ALL THINGS!

IT MUST NOT BE, COMRADE GENERAL! IT IS TOO DANGEROUS --!

NOW, I MUST ONLY THINK OF A RUSE -- A WAY TO BRING CAPTAIN AMERICA HERE!

AND WHEN YOU DO, I SHALL UTTERLY DESTROY HIM!

MEANWHILE, NOT FAR AWAY, AS IF TO PROVE ANEW THAT FATE WORKS IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS...



LOOK!
SOMEBODY UP
THERE MUST
LIKE ME!

I DIDN'T DARE DREAM
THAT TASHA WAS STILL
WEARIN' THE HOMING-BEAM
GIZMO I GAVE HER--BUT,
SHE IS!

AND IT LED US STRAIGHT TO
HER! WHO SAYS THESE EAST-
WEST ROMANCES CAN'T HAVE
A HAPPY ENDING?

ALAS, MY
FRIEND--OUR
MISSION IS
FAR FROM
COMPLETED!

SHE IS STILL A
PRISONER--
DESET BY
FULL MANY
A FOE!

AND MINUTES LATER, AS THE DAUNTLESS
PAIR COLOURFULLY LEAVE THEIR HOVERING CRAFT...



WE HAVE
REACHED
THE VERY
CENTRE
OF THIS
BASE!

YET, 'TIS
PASSING
STRANGE
THAT NO
AIRCRAFT
MENACED
US!

YEAH--BUT I
WON'T COMPLAIN
ABOUT IT IF YOU
DON'T!

STOP THEM--
BUT, DO NOT
FIRE!

ONE OF THEM
IS AN AVENGER!
WHAT A FEAT TO
CAPTURE HIM
ALIVE!

WADDAYA KNOW!
OL' HAWKEYE--
A POTENTIAL
PROPAGANDA VICTORY!

HOWEVER, THE TWO NEWCOMERS PROVE
MUCH EASIER TO HAVE THAN TO HOLD...



BAH! THESE
PUNY FLEAS
PROVIDE SPARSE
SPORT FOR ME!

HAVE THEY NO
WARRIORS MORE
WORTHY TO FACE
THE PEERLESS
PRINCE OF POWER?

MUSTER, I DON'T
GIVE A HANG IF THEY
THROW A BLASTED
PARADE IN OUR
HONOUR!

ALL I CARE ABOUT
IS NATASHA--AND
NOTWIN' THIS SIDE OF
DEATH IS GONNA KEEP
ME FROM HER!

NATASHA?
AYE--I DID
ALMOST
FORGET--

SHE IS THE
FEMALE WHOM
THOU DESIREST
TO RESCUE!



'TIS LIKELY THAT SHE
BE IN YON STRUCTURE
--BEYOND THESE
STONY WALLS!

IF SO, BY THE
BANDY BEAKS
OF DIONYSUS--
SHE SHALL BE
FREED!!

BUT, AS HERCULES AND HAWKEYE PLUNGE THRU THE MAMMOTH OPENING...



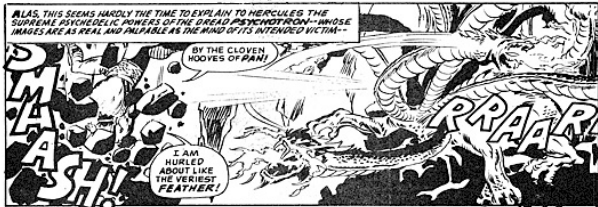




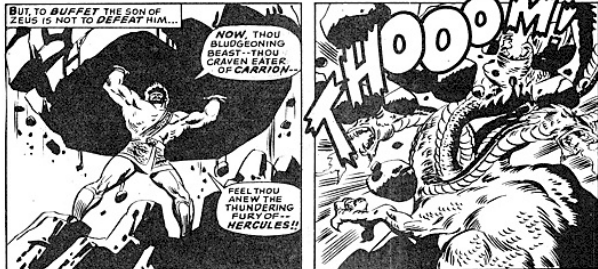
THEN, AS THE VERY FLOOR BENEATH HIM SEEMS TO TURN TO STONY CRAGS--AS A LONG-FORGOTTEN ROAR
ECHOES THROUGH THE STYGIAN BLACKNESS--HERCULES TURNS TO BEHOLD--



ALAS, THIS SEEMS HARDLY THE TIME TO EXPLAIN TO HERCULES THE SUPREME PSYCHEDELIC POWERS OF THE DREAD PSYCHOTRON--WHOSE IMAGES ARE AS REAL AND PALPABLE AS THE MIND OF ITS INTENDED VICTIM--



BUT, TO BUFFET THE SON OF ZEUS IS NOT TO DEFEAT HIM...



YET, EVEN AS THE SOUND OF SHATTERING STONE RESOUNDS.....



WHILE, SEPARATED FROM THAT FRIGHTENING
PHANTASMAGORIA BY A MEKE METAL DOOR--
AND YET BY ALL INFINITY ITSELF...

AH--THE ONE CALLED
HAWKEYE IS STILL
UNCONSCIOUS!

IF CAPTAIN
AMERICA
HAS NO MORE
STAMINA THAN
HIS FRIEND,
MY FUTURE
VICTORY IS
ASSURED!

THEN, SUDDENLY--

SONNY, THE ONLY
THING YOU'RE
ASSURED IS A
SWIFT KICK IN
THE CHOPS!

SMACK!

WHA--??

NOW THAT I'M ALL THROUGH
PLAYIN' POSSUM--SUPPOSIN'
YOU TELL ME WHERE YOU CRUMBS
ARE HIDIN' THE BLACK WIDOW!

BLACK
WIDOW?
WHAT IS THAT
INFERNAL, LYING
FEMALE TO YOU,
AVENGER?

I LOVE HER
--IF YOU'VE
GOTTA KNOW!

SO, IF YOU KNOW WHERE
SHE IS, SPIT IT OUT FAST--
WHILE YOU'VE STILL GOT ALL
YOUR TEETH!

YOU LOVE HER--LOVE THAT TIRESOME TOOL OF
THE DECADENT DEMOCRACIES?

THAT IS THE ULTIMATE,
THE SUPREME JEST
OF ALL!

OKAY, WISE-GUY
--YOU'VE HAD IT!

BUT, BEFORE THE ENRAGED AVENGER CAN REACH HIS FOE...

WITLESS FOOL!
IF YOU HAD NOT LOST
YOUR TEMPER--AS I
PLANNED--YOU
WOULD HAVE RETRIEVED
YOUR BOW!

OHNNN--!!

INSTEAD, YOU
STUPIDLY CHOSE
TO RUSH AT ME--
GIVING ME TIME TO
USE MY WEAPON!

LONG MINUTES LATER, THE TWICE-FELLED ARCHER AWAKENS--AS A HOSTILE VOICE FILLS HIS STILL-REELING SENSES...

MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE, BOTH OF YOU! SOON CAPTAIN AMERICA WILL ARRIVE TO KEEP YOU COMPANY!

OH, HAWKEYE-- MY BELOVED! ARE YOU--ALL RIGHT?

I--SEEM TO HEAR NATASHA-- JUST LIKE SHE WAS HERE!

BUT, I CAN'T THINK--CAN HARDLY STAND! I--

BE THANKFUL YOU ARE ALIVE. YOU ARROW-WIELDING DOLT!

HAD I INCREASED THE POWER AND SPEED OF MY BELT-EMBLEM, YOU WOULD NEVER HAVE OPENED YOUR EYES AGAIN!

WH--WHO ARE YOU? YOU SEEM SO--FAMILIAR, AND YET...

PERHAPS, BLACK WIDOW. IF I REMOVED THIS CUMBERSOME MASK--!

YOU!

ALL THIS TIME-- ALL THESE YEARS-- I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD!

WHY HAVE YOU RETURNED TO PLAGUE ME NOW?

AND, AS HAWKEYE SHAKES OFF THE LAST VESTIGES OF GROGGINESS, HE HEARS...

YOU ARE HOSTILE, MY DARLING NATASHA! YET, I REMEMBER WHEN YOU FELT QUITE OTHERWISE!

'TASHA--YOU'RE REALLY HERE! BUT, THE RED GUARDIAN CALLED YOU DARLING!

WHAT IN SAM HILL'S GOING ON?

HAWKEYE--YOU'VE RECOVERED! THANK HEAVEN YOU ARE SAFE...

OUR GUEST ASKED YOU A QUESTION, MY LOVE! HE DESERVES AN ANSWER, DOES HE NOT?

YEAH--LIKE THE MAN SAID, I WANT SOME ANSWERS!

OH, MY DARLING--MY DARLING! HOW CAN I EVER HOPE TO EXPLAIN TO YOU--

...THAT THE MAN YOU CALL THE RED GUARDIAN IS MY--HUSBAND!

YOUR... HUSBAND?

THEN, I GUESS... YOU DON'T HAVE TO WASTE YOUR BREATH EXPLAINING ANYTHING TO ME, LADY!

IT COULDN'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE... NOW!



'INSIDE COMICS'

MARVEL'S GOLDEN AGE!

BY KEN HOWSE

Marvel's Golden Age . . . the Axis forces were being thoroughly routed. Swastika festooned aircraft fell like dead flies; German U-boats made their final dives and a host of warfare machinery manned by snarling goose-steppers ground to a halt. Great heroes rained havoc on the Nazis and the Japanese and comic readers thrilled to the exploits of their favourite costumed warriors. The Golden Age produced a multitude of heroes and heroics, unequalled in the annals of comic book history. Captain America achieved his rightful status as the American Idol, while Prince Namor the Sub Mariner and the Human Torch gained their own brand of notoriety as mortal enemies with entirely conflicting philosophies.

During the early forties, the very notion of a "brotherhood" embracing these diverse characters would have seemed incongruous, if not a little crazy. But the improbable has never been a stumbling block in the Marvel universe and so the first Marvel super-group, comprising popular heroes, was formed in 1946. Considering the popularity of teams in modern comicdom, it is, perhaps, a little surprising that it took a half dozen years or so after the advent of the celebrated heroes — Captain America et al — before the band of heroes became a reality. Of course it is easy to be wise after the event, but it is even more staggering to record that the first super team made only two appearances. In fact, circumstances prevailing at the time almost kept the number down to a single outing, but, despite everything, the advent of the All Winners Squad is as important historically as any other event during the Marvel Age.

The genesis of the All Winners Squad began, not surprisingly, in *All Winners Comics* — Marvel's ninth title — which premiered in 1941. The first issue, advertised as *All Aces Comics*, appeared a month behind schedule and featured Captain America, The Human Torch and Toro, Sub Mariner, The

Angel and The Black Marvel all in their own stories. With issue number two, The Angel and The Black Marvel were displaced by the Destroyer and The Whizzer.

One of the more striking features of *All Winners Comics* during this period were the bold and complex covers. Most were rendered by some-time science fiction pulp artist Alex Schomberg, and featured a host of heroes and villains entangled with axis forces and fantastic machinery. The covers of the Captain America titles had set the standard and *All Winners* certainly carried on in the same tradition. Most of these were wild, to say the least, although they certainly would have helped to move comics from the newsagent's racks with great rapidity. As with most of the golden age comics the interior art did not match the covers, striving for ideas and action at the expense of artistic excellence.

With its 19th issue *All Winners Comics* banded its characters together to form the *All Winners Squad*, another milestone in the Marvel Universe. Technically, the group were Marvel's second super-team, following a now obscure bunch of characters, known as the Three X's who made only one appearance within the pages of the premiere issue in the first series of *Mystic Comics* in March 1940. The squad were, however, the only Marvel group in the Golden Age to graduate from their own strips.

The first story was entitled "The Crime of the Ages" by Bill Finger and Syd Shores, and featured Captain America and Bucky, The Human Torch and Toro, The Sub Mariner, The Whizzer and an unknown quantity, relatively speaking, called Miss America (no relation to the Captain). The issue sported a strikingly symbolic cover, depicting the members of the squad as puppets on a string, apparently helpless before their triumphantly leaping foe, with The Torch flying around as the only liberated

member.

After that debut it appeared, for a while, that the group would be banished into comic book limbo until an event transpired that would be directly responsible for prolonging their career, albeit briefly, and would bring about one of those confusing continuity problems that baffle comic collectors, and latter day fans, from time to time. Issue 20 of *All Winners Comics* underwent a little change to *All Teen Comics*, a title that ran no super hero strips at all. However, due to the existence of a second *All Winners Squad* story, it was slotted into *Young Allies Comics*, which had run for twenty issues, featuring Captain America and the Human Torch's young side-kick, Bucky and Toro. But the title of *Young Allies* was changed for that one issue, thus producing *All Winners Comics 21*, as a kind of "one-shot" publication.

The second story, "Riddle of the Demented Dwarf," by Otto Binder and Syd Shores, was obviously a fairly hasty construct. Once again the cover overshadowed the interior art and showed the rest of the squad "encircled" by the fiery trails of the two flame androids, while being menaced by the issues villain. This villain in turn was threatening a prone young lady, which seemed to be quite a popular concept at the time. This story, interestingly enough, was billed as a "full-length mystery thriller", which hardly fits the concept of the group as we know them today.

Although the "big three" of Namor — the revenge-consuming prince of the sea, The Human Torch — flame android extra-ordinary, and Captain America — the scourge of the Nazi hordes, were readily familiar characters who had appeared in several titles already, the other two squad members pulled their weight even if they did not pass into comic book lore like their illustrious partners. The Whizzer and Miss America integrated quite satisfactorily and provided a

fresh aspect to the whole idea of interplay between heroes of impeccable pedigree. Certainly, the experiment would have suffered from a diminished impact without them.

The Whizzer's alter ego was Bob Frank who had his origin recalled in *USA Comics* 1 in 1941. Accompanying his father on an African bush expedition, the young Bob Frank was bitten by a venomous cobra which was, in turn, swiftly attacked by a mongoose. The mongoose itself was fatally wounded in the vicious battle and so the boy was injected with the blood of the dead animal and later found that he possessed the lightning speed associated with the mongoose, thus the rather unwieldy name. His power was unique to the super group.

If The Whizzer's powers were indispensable then those of Miss America were startling and outshone them all. Her origin from *Marvel Mystery Comics* 49 recounted a visit to a converted lighthouse where her uncle was carrying out some electrical experiments that he had finished. During a powerful electrical discharge caused by a violent storm outside she was bombarded by enough electricity to have killed a thousand men. Somehow she survived and lay in a coma, hovering between life and death, for a week. Inexplicably she recovered and awakened to miraculous powers of flight and heightened senses. Her 'civilian' identity was that of Madeline Joyce, a bespectacled mousy girl.

Happily these supporting characters did not die completely following the demise of the All Winners Squad as a comic strip. Both have been resurrected lately and have, in fact, appeared in a handful of Marvel's American titles during the past few years. Most notably they co-starred with the Invaders, a modern incarnation of the All Winners Squad, which recounted the exploits of the 'big three' during the second world war, along with a few other heroes that form the new supporting cast. These stories could reasonably have been billed as the untold tales of the All Winners Squad which took place during the few years preceding their first appearance in 1946.

While it is true that Marvel characters rarely stay suspended forever it seems unlikely that the All Winners Squad will see any more action in the foreseeable future. In their case it is the notion of a team that lives on. That concept has been employed successfully over the decades that followed the golden age. To borrow from their very name it proved to be yet another winner.

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

COMIC MART

NAME: Rajesh Shah

ADDRESS: 27 Carlton Avenue West, North Wembley, Middlesex HA9 3RF.

OFFERING: (All British weeklies) Spiderman comic 311, 314, 329, 331, 333-348, 356, 357; Marvel Team-Up 1-9, 11-17, Rampage 1-34, Future Tense 1-10. (All British monthlies) Mad 223, Frantic 6, Rampage 1, 2, 6, 7, Savage Sword of Conan 33, 35-44, 46. (British Annuals) Avengers 1977, Victor 1978, 79, Valiant 1979.

WANTED: American comics (esp. X-Men, Master of Kung-Fu).

NAME: Damon Redmond

ADDRESS: 15 Kirkham Road, Bilton, Harrogate, North Yorkshire.

OFFERING: (All USA monthlies) Daredevil 135, 146, 167, 168; Ghost Rider 40; Team-Up 92, 101; Spotlight 4; Moonknights 3; Thor 259, 277, 279, 293, 294, 301, 302, 303; Shogun Warriors 11; Peter Parker 53.

WANTED: (All USA monthlies) Avengers 1-190, 196-200, 204, 205; X-Men 1-112, 114-138, 142-145; Marvel Tales 1-25; Two-in-One 1-32; 34-61; 63-67; 73, 74. (British monthly) Rampage 1-29.

NAME: M. Wood

ADDRESS: 10 Albany Mobile Homes Park, Stubbington Lane, Stubbington, Fareham, Hants.

OFFERING: (American) Silver Surfer 7; Cap Marvel 1-4; Sub-Mariner 1. (Or can offer other American Marvels).

WANTED: (American) X-Men 130; Dazzler 1, 2, 5.

NAME: Gareth Forrest

ADDRESS: 11 Josephine Terrace, Limavady, Co. Derry, N.I.

OFFERING: (All American) Ms Marvel 18; Captain America 251; Defenders 89; Thor 297; Avengers 196, 197; Captain Marvel 53; Tales to Astonish 12-14; Fantastic Four 182, 183.

WANTED: X-Men 132, 137, 139.

NAME: Michael G. Hogan

ADDRESS: Lisboney Service Station, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, Ireland.

OFFERING: (British weeklies) Team-Up 1-25; Valour 1-19; Future Tense 1-32. (Also most weeklies after 1977).

WANTED: (American Marvels) Son of Satan 1-8; Nova 1-8; Kull 1-22; X-Men 67-93, 137.

NAME: David Dubost

ADDRESS: 39 Orchard Road, Moreton, Wirral Merseyside.

OFFERING: Spiderman (British weekly) 364, 420, Titans (British weekly) 1; Star Wars (British weekly/monthly) 23, 94, 120, 148; Rampage Monthly 2, 7, 11, 18, 35; Valour (BW) 7-10; Starburst (BM) 22, 29; Dr. Who (BW/BM) 4, 45; Forces in Combat (BW) 32; Hulk (BW) 49, 50; Capt America (BW) 4; Team-Up (BW) 12, 13, 15; Conan Pocket Book (BM) 3; Marvel Super Adventure (BW) 2; Star Heroes Winter Special.

WANTED: MWOM/MSH 340-350, 358, 366, 367, 370, 371; Spidey 310-312, 315-318, 320-324, 325, 332-333, 335, 413.

NAME: Patrick Doherty

ADDRESS: 36 Pickerston Hill, Newarthill, Lancashire, Scotland ML1 5BW.

OFFERING: Adventure Comics 445; Conan 65; Defenders 39, 44; Inhumans 2, 5; Iron Fist 5, 7; Marvel feature 6; Mr Miracle 22, 23, 24; Omac 3, 5; Kamad Kamasdi 11, 50 and Thor 254 and Daredevil 29.

WANTED: Captain America 254, 255; What If 27; Avengers 93 and X-Men 94-103.

NAME: Derek Anderson

ADDRESS: 11 Laird Street, Montfith, Dundee, Scotland.

OFFERING: (British weeklies) Mighty World of Marvel 301; Complete Fantastic Four 10, 20, 21, 22, Star Wars Weekly 20, 21; (American monthly) Tales to Astonish 8, Marvel Superheroes 80, Marvel Two-in-One 78; Starburst 36.

WANTED: Any Omega The Unknown (old American bi-monthly mag) or Marvel Two-in-One 53, 54, 55, 57 and Savage Sword of Conan 16. All comics in very good condition.

NAME: Julian Fow

ADDRESS: 1 Larch Wood Crescent, Leyland, Lancs. PR5 1RJ.

OFFERING: (American monthlies) Iron Man 133, 139, 142; X-Men 128, 139, 141; Avengers 198, 199, 201; Two-in-One 58, 70, 71; Daredevil: 167, 168; Shogun Warriors 10, 19; FF 229; Rawhide Kid 151; Captain America 250; Thor 292; She Hulk 10; MSA Starring Avengers 30; Spidey 215; Captain Marvel 62; Marvel Premiere: Dr Who 59; MSH showcasing Hulk 80 (GB comics) M.T. 2-16, 18-20, 23, 24; Future Tense: 11, 29, 35; MSA 1, 2, (with transfers) 12; Spidey Hulk 389; Marvel Superheroes 371, 372. (Monthly).

WANTED: (British weeklies) FF 1-15; Avengers 1-10; Rampage 1-10; Rampage Monthly 25-28; FF Pocket Book 1-6, 10-12, 14, 15; Defenders 92-95, 98.

CAPTAIN BRITAIN LETTERS

ANSWERS BY PAUL NEARY

All correspondence to: Bernie Jaye, Marvel Comics Ltd., Jadwin House, 205-211 Kentish Town Road, London NW5.

Dear Personages,

Re: Marvel Superheroes 377.

Fantastic. What can I say, I loved it, well the Cap'n B. part anyway (on account of already having Avengers no. 182 and X-Men no. 65). Although 'we' had already seen the cover, it was only in black and white before, but in glorious colour - breathtaking, well done Mr. D!

As for the strip itself, well to all involved in any way what-so-ever, thank you for a marvellous job. Especially Mr. Davis for his art. I totally agree with Teddy Jamieson about Mr. D. having a tough act to follow but I think he's 'followed' it quite - no, very - well and although it is still 'early days' yet, I think M.S. no. 377 shows far more promise than Cap B. no. 1 did, even though that was in colour. Personally I think this first part has been the best C.B. story so far, even surpassing the Claremont / Byrne C.B. in the U.S. M.T.U. 2-partner.

Onto the actual thing itself, a great opening page, with Arthur and Merlin adding continuity, along with Jackdaw, to Cap's last appearance; Jackdaw's relaxing way of travelling through dimensions; and an excellent first glimpse of the 'baddies'; in fact my only complaint with that page is that Cap's old costume was only seen for 1 (or 1½ if you like) panels but a fast-moving storyline obviously took priority over nostalgia, which after all is perhaps the best attitude.

A vast improvement in C.B. Mk II over its 'predecessor' is the way in which that 'fast-moving' priority takes effect so that the good Captain appears to be discovering exactly what he can do (he's yet to find what he can't do) without, it seems, having to have a half-hour break everytime to think about it as it looked like he did in the Trimpe origin. All credit goes to Mr. D. again there.

The story was very well done as well (and we mustn't forget the lettering!) right up to the last panel, very interesting, but remember if you got too carried away you could end up treading on very dangerous ground.

Still all-in-all a very good (though short - too short) read. When the X-Men finish next ish, I expect they'll be replaced by the Defenders which will only fill up 17 of the 20 empty pages, thus why not put the remaining 3 pages to some very good use, along with another page which I daresay you'll be able to spare without too much hardship to give ol' C.B. 10 pages at least - I say that because you don't have to stop there you know!

Okay round-up time now:

1. Thanks for a great ish, keep up the good work all of you and with a bit of luck this should survive without too much hassle.
2. I'm Mike Teague not 'League' but I can understand how you got the name wrong with my lousy signature.
3. Timesmasher? - curious!

By the way, before I forget, what happened to C.B.'s eyes, did Merlin poke him with that fork of his that he gathers the hay with?

Bye, thanks and good luck.

Mike Teague
Uxbridge,
Middx.

Thanks for your letter Mike. We won't be treading upon dangerous ground as you call it in future episodes of the Captain Britain strip. (See the answer to Andy Jackman's letter). It's also nice to see that our re-thinking of the whole presentation of C.B. meets with your approval. In fact the only negative letter we received in the whole mailbag was the letter from Andrew Ramsey, printed elsewhere in this column. As you observed, we aimed to make the new C.B. faster moving, more believable and involved in a whole new Universe of Marvel Britain creations, yet to be revealed. For those of you who aren't following the "Timesmasher" series in Rampage magazine, then get moving fast, or you'll miss the birth of Britain's newest super-hero.

Alan Davis and Dave Thorpe both made their main-stream comics debut in our Captain Britain strip which seems to have met with a great deal of critical acclaim! Firstly, it gladdens my old editorial heart to see these two creators beginning their careers in such fine style... and secondly I think that to dwell too closely on something we felt could be bettered (i.e. the old C.B.) would be a mistake. First we're going places C.B. has never been before... and after that, well we may just have him revisit some old friends under slightly different circumstances!



Dear Bernie,

Well it's nice to see Cap Britain back, especially with an all British Creative team. Alan Davis' art although very good in close up, seemed to lack definition in longer shots and smaller frames.

The Crazy Gang appear to be a mixture of Lewis Carroll's 'Alice in Wonderland' and the Ring masters Circus of Crime and as such, are foes which don't turn up very regularly: I



hope.

Dave Thorpe's script although humorous in places, falls into one of those nasty traps of comic scripting i.e. the use of words like *feller*, *cor* etc. If this strip was being produced in the 1950's OK, but in the 1980's people just don't use these words, so c'mon Dave make the vocab. especially from Cap a bit more interesting. (Although the vocab. isn't as bad as the incessant use of 'mate' in the Invaders comic.)

Apart from this, Dave's first writing on Cap proved to be very good indeed.

I see that Paul Neary is plotting Cap and to be frank, Paul has me a bit worried in the General direction the strip is going to take, I see from the last panel that Paul intends to take Cap on a one man attack on fascism or so it seems. While this is a particularly nasty foe, I do hope the strip does not get bogged down as constantly happened to Cap. America until recently.

Personally I don't really like this kind of story. Because it tends to give publicity to lunatic groups like the NF and . . . Because it keeps the memory of Hitler as a person alive and for someone to gain 'immortality' through such terrible deeds to me is rather sick. I don't believe that we ever forget the pain and suffering he caused or his extermination of millions of Jews, Slavs and Russians. We need to be reminded of this awful event to ensure it never happens again.

So you, Paul as a 'pro' and as Editor-in-Chief I'm sure must realise the tremendous responsibility you have to your younger readers. I hope you take this chance to educate as Stan Lee would do about the dangers of this evil doctrine.

When this storyline is over I would like you to explore Cap's personality and to show how it has changed after the 'Quest for Arthur' story. Another possible story is one in which Cap visits Muir Island and meets up with Moira MacTaggart, Lorna Dane, Sean Cassidy etc. After all even the bleak Scottish Islands are part of Caps territory.

Although the above would be great stories I feel it is the job of this strip to create new characters to fill the very empty British Marvel Universe with characters. After all Canadas got a whole team of superheroes (compare populations).

Anyway I seem to have gone on for too long, so that's all till next time.

'See ya'.

Andy Jackman,
Ossett,
West Yorkshire

P.S. Let's see Lord Falsworth's remaining family 'pop' up in the strip soon.

About the "crazy gang" . . . C.B. is stuck in a nightmare world where odd things happen. I think if we'd have had more than six pages to play with this might have been more evident. Please bear with us and remember that we're not necessarily trying to hit you with "new villains" for the hero to fight, but that we have a situation where C.B. is stranded among odd people and events in a world not his own.

Now onto the N.F. issue. We are not pursuing this as a storyline. The military looking leader was included on the poster merely as a contrast to the political posters we are used to seeing on our Earth at present. As I hinted before, we are going to flesh out the Marvel Britain Universe a bit, and then we may bring back a few of C.B.'s older acquaintances.



Hi,

The following is my opinion on the first appearance of the CAPTAIN BRITAIN, and hopefully you'll bear with me on this.

The first I heard about it was the ad utilizing the cover of M.S. No. 377. Since at the time I was hoping for something of this sort to come along (i.e. change of costume and storyline) I was glad to see that my hopes might now be fulfilled, so I waited for M.S. No. 377 to arrive to see to what degree these hopes were justified. Eventually it did come through my letter box, of course, and I was glad to see that the cover at least lived up to any optimistic expectations I had been entertaining about the new feature. The art looked as good as it had when I first saw it, and though the colouring left a small bit to be desired (a fault which I think was more to do with the printing than anything else) it added some extra flair to the thing.

The strip itself holds mixed feelings for me; for a start it's only five pages long. I mean it's hardly the greatest way for a hero to make his debut. Hopefully you'll extend it once the X-men finish their run in a couple of issues.

The art in the main is good, but the layouts could be much improved both

in the panel layouts (i.e. the positions of the panels on the page) and the layouts in the panels, though the latter is the better of the two. The best page in this respect was the first. This looked great, though it was slightly cramped in the bottom panel (something else that could well be improved in the rest of the thing especially towards the end. This is another region in which more space could be very useful.) I feel that page one could have been slightly improved, along with the extra space in the bottom panel, by excluding the borders on the first two, except where they were touched by the background or word balloons. The art itself was, as I've said, pretty good. Even those nutty villains looked reasonably good.

As said before, I was looking forward to a new costume. I'm glad to see that it is as divergent as possible from Union Jack's costume, considering that the basic idea is the same, i.e. the Union Jack. The mask is different from the old one, in fact it's different from any mask. I quite like it though. The gauntlets have been used many times before, but it's nice to see them plain white rather than some fancy colour. The boots are curious. The closest thing to them must be Colossus'. I think they're the let down of the uniform, but they aren't bad enough for me to protest that hard about. One thing I'd like to know is why Merlin (I presume it was Merlin) changed the costume anyway. Did he figure that modern Britain would best appreciate a hero if he looked like a modern superhero, without all the symbolic Star Sceptre bit (speaking of which I'll be you got a whole lot of letters pointing out that C.B. only has his staff, that which was transformed into the sceptre, in the first panel) or did Arthur tell him the old one stunk?!

Now on to the rest of the characters. My first reaction was, 'You've gotta be kidding. What sort of 'serious' characters are these??? And I was right, though not to quite the degree I'd thought at first. The name isn't exactly original and doesn't give the right image for a supposedly serious and, presumably normal comic strip. I don't like the idea of using Alice in Wonderland copies, and/or rejects. The two 'magicians' aren't that bad, neither that executioner, but the others - yuck!!! That's the only word that really fits the bill.

Jackdaw wasn't that well handled some of the time, but he wasn't that bad for most of it. That bit on page two with the clown guy was a nice bit of light hearted relief, but was out of character. Other than that he was okay and provided some humour to the thing.

As to where the story is going; it could be good, it could be bad.

Depends on how it's handled. I hope it's handled right, though what right is I can't say. As Arthur says "They have a destiny to fulfil. . . ." That's it. Thanks for listening.

Richard Harris
South Croydon
Surrey.

The panel layouts in issue 377 were not as they were on Alan Davis' original pages. One of the problems of adding dialogue balloons to original artwork is that you need a lot of room to do it! How much room is a thing that it takes a few tries to get right . . . and looking at Alan Davis' accomplished artwork it's often hard to remember that he is very new to the world of professional comics! The results of Alan going to town on his great drawings was that I had the unenviable task of cutting, resizing and editing the drawings from 5 pages to 6 pages, to give us room to letter the job. I must say that it didn't help the overall appearance of the strip . . . you live and learn!

To reiterate what I have already said about the villains . . . imagine yourself in your high street one day, when suddenly you are confronted by Mad Jim Jaspers and his gang. Now, what would you think? - "Pretty lousy villains" or "has the world gone mad"? my guess is that you'd think the second! We're going for a more realistic feel and it's throwing a small percentage of readers who are tending to think in clichés!



Dear Marvel,

This letter was meant to be short and to the point but I have kept quiet long enough and shall stay silent no more.

The Marvel Revolution so full of promise has turned decidedly sour. I base this statement on the recent lay-out of the British Weeklies and that lunacy called Marvel Madhouse. If that was not bad enough, you dare to present us with 10th rate garbage that stinks!

Cap deserves better than this.

You may ask why I complain, very simply the first issue of the new Captain Britain is trash, pure crud. I don't know what you were attempting to do but you failed. And do you know why it failed, because of the bottom rate villains, who made a mockery of the pathetic story-line and poor dialogue. In a word the Cap has dropped to a record all time low that beats even J. Lawrence's efforts AND THAT IS BAD!!

Either produce the goods or give a, hopefully, up-coming, writer a shot.

I know I can do better than this (God, any-one can).

Already I have real foes and complex story-lines that have to be seen to be believed, as well as my own team the Knights Errant headed by Chivalrre the Gallantean.

So if Marvel's looking for a new writer, well I'm the man. Honestly I would love to write the C.B. strip because there is so much potential that it is unbelievable. Give me a chance and I'll produce a hero unlike any other. Or alternatively, any Marvel artist disillusioned with a certain C.B. comic-strip or their name is David Lloyd, I'll be honoured to have them draw for me.

Yours discontentedly,

Andrew J. Ramsay.

P.S. Make mine Marvel, only if you improve the C.B. strip, and get rid of the crummy elf.

Andrew, we're quite prepared to look at your efforts . . . but you haven't sent them to us yet! Remember too, that denigrating other people's efforts doesn't elevate your own work . . . the only thing that does is producing work that is itself of a high quality!



Dear Bernie, Paul, Dave, Alan and Elitta,

I did have reservations about the return of Captain Britain, but now that he's here I hope he's here to stay. It may be too early to judge but the first instalment was so well handled that I have to say my piece.

The plot of the story is interesting, raising the questions it does about what the heck's been going on since Cap. B. left Earth. Or is this an alternative Earth, as hinted at by the final page? What is the reason for Cap's new look? I'm prepared to believe that Merlin is behind it, but if so, why did

Jackdaw's bow disappear with the Star Sceptre? Has Merlin gone pacifist?

Newcomer Dave Thorpe has a great knack of producing believable, witty dialogue, making the Captain and co. much more likeable characters. Alan Davis' artwork is also fairly new to me and is a lot better here than "Marvel Action 1" suggested it would be, although a little more detail on C.B.'s legs would be appreciated. At present they look as if they're full of air. Although Elitta's lettering improved as the story progressed, it does tend to be a little large in places, so if you could just shrink the balloons a bit and remove the thick black lines which border them, please.

My only real complaint concerns the length of the story. Six pages isn't a lot on a monthly basis, especially with a story as good as this. Surely the creative team can manage at least ten pages an issue. This month's cover was superbly rendered by both artist and colourist, and hopefully we'll see CB on the cover occasionally. Until next

Mart G. Tay,
New Seaham,
County Durham.

Yes, it is an alternative Earth, and Merlin is behind it. The reason behind Cap's new look is that I wanted to begin a British chapter of C.B. with a clean slate. Alan Davis made the point that he would feel happier with a hero he felt was visually his own creation. Hence the new costume. Jackdaw's bow disappeared for some reason best known to Alan (or maybe it was in the script) . . . hey, Dave . . . Alan - why did the bow disappear? We agree, six pages is fairly short, but we have a budget to adhere to and adhere we must.

Finally I'd like to thank-you for all your letters, and ask you to hang on, pay attention and join us on our excursions into areas not yet entered by Marvel U.S.A.



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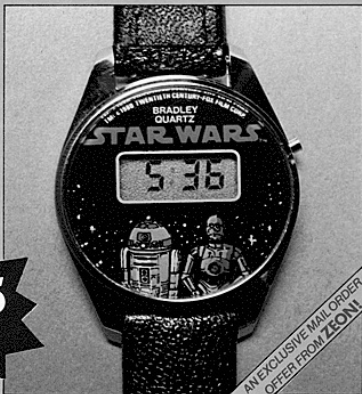
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